

28 Years Ago at MSC

‘The Eagle has landed’

Reprinted from the July 25, 1969, Roundup

We did it! “Tranquility Base here. The Eagle has landed,” announced the flawless lunar landing of Apollo 11 at 3:18 p.m. on July 20, 1969.

And when Armstrong’s heart rate rose to 156 at touchdown there were similar reactions on Earth as pride, awe and humility struck the hearts of administrators, flight controllers, programmers, contractors and everyone who had played a part, however small, in the accomplishment.

Communications were good during the landing as Armstrong took over control of the Eagle during the final seconds and maneuvered it past a football-field-sized crater filled with boulders to a smoother area at the Southern edge of landing site number 2 near the Sea of Tranquility.

Immediately after touchdown, he and Edwin Aldrin, lunar module pilot, conducted a checkout of the LM for contingency takeoff and gave a brief description of the lunar surface.

After verifying all systems as “go” for ascent staging and lunar stay, the crew requested permission from Mission Control to begin their moon-walk five hours earlier than planned.

Request granted, the landing crew began donning their Extra Vehicular Mobility Units, depressurizing the LM and otherwise preparing for exploration of Tranquility Base, Moon.

This EVA preparation took somewhat longer than anticipated, causing a delay in the modified flight plan of about 12 minutes.

The Eagle’s hatch opened at 9:39 p.m. At 9:51 Armstrong slid out onto the front porch, released the Modularized Equipment Stowage Assembly and started the black and white television camera that was to record man’s first lunar surface

activity for the people of Earth.

He then came slowly down the LM ladder, bounced once between the last rung and Eagle’s large footpad and, at 9:54 p.m., placed his left foot firmly on the surface of the Moon.

Major events progressed rapidly from that point as Armstrong took pictures of the LM, gathered his contingency sample and familiarized himself with the lunar environment.

A short moon landing ceremony was conducted by the two crewmen, beginning with the unveiling of a plaque on the LM which carries the words: “Here, men from the planet Earth first set foot on the Moon July, 1969 A.D. We came in peace for all mankind.”

At 10:40 p.m. Armstrong planted the flag of the United States in the lunar surface and a few minutes later President Nixon placed the first Earth-Moon telephone call, thanking the men on behalf of all Americans.

During their stay, the lunar astronauts collected about 50 pounds of bulk rock samples, about 20 pounds of documented samples and several core samples of lunar soil.

They also deployed the Early Apollo Scientific Experiments Package, containing a passive seismic experiment package and a laser ranging retro-reflector.

The crew described the area around the landing site as being covered with a fine powder which had quite a lot of cohesiveness.

Aldrin said that the rocks seemed to be slippery because of the powder. He also reported finding a purple rock similar to the types of mica found on Earth.

At 12:12 Monday morning the triumphant lunar landing crew, with sample, film, and a storehouse of personal observations, reentered the Eagle, slammed the hatch and prepared to rejoin Collins in Columbia for the trip back to Earth.



“I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to Earth.”

— President John F. Kennedy, May 21, 1961.



Above: Landing a man on the moon...footage transmitted to Earth from the Tranquility Base landing site shows Buzz Aldrin setting the American flag into the lunar soil on July 20, 1969...

Left: ...and returning him safely to Earth. In Houston, Mission Control workers celebrate the conclusion of the Apollo 11 flight with the recovery of the crew July 24.

Gilruth led the way

During the Apollo 11 Post-Recovery Press Conference Thursday, July 24, 1969, George Low, manager of the Apollo Spacecraft Program Office ...cited the contribution to manned space flight by one individual...

“...there is one individual I would like to single out and say just a few words about. This is the man who started Project Mercury, who started manned space flight in this country, who led us through that with the first American manned space flights, who led us from that into Gemini with 10 successful flights where we learned how to operate in space, and who taught many of us here all we know today about how to fly men in space—and that is the Director of this Center, Bob Gilruth.

“Bob, I think I speak for all of us here in Houston and the entire country in saying that without you, the events of the past week just would not have been possible. Thanks a lot.”

Gilruth Center News

New Hours: The Gilruth Center will now remain open until 2 p.m. Saturday and close at 9 p.m. Friday.

Sign up policy: All classes and athletic activities are first come, first served. Sign up in person at the Gilruth Center and show a yellow EAA badge. Classes tend to fill up two weeks in advance. Payment must be made in full, in exact change or by check, at the time of registration. No registration will be taken by telephone. For more information, call x30304. Payment by cash or check.

EAA badges: Required for use of the Gilruth Center. Employees, spouses eligible dependents, NASA retirees and spouses may apply for photo identification badges from 7:30 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Friday; and 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturdays. Cost is \$10. Dependents must be between 16 and 23 years old.

Basketball: Registration is ongoing for men’s summer basketball leagues for play on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings. Cost is \$315 per team.

NASA Fitness Challenge: Runs through Aug. 31. Call x30301 for more information.

Hatha Yoga: A stress relieving, stretching and breathing exercise routine to unite body, mind and spirit. Classes meet from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Thursdays. Cost is \$40 for eight weeks.

Nutrition intervention program: A six-week program to learn more about the role diet and nutrition play in health, including lectures, private consultations with a dietitian and blood analysis. Program is open to all employees, contractors and spouses. For more information call Tammie Shaw at x32980.

Defensive driving: One-day course is offered once a month. Next class is June 21. Pre-registration required. Cost is \$25.

Stamp club: Meets at 7 p.m. every second and fourth Monday in Rm. 216.

Weight safety: Required courses for employees wishing to use the weight room will be offered from 8-9:30 p.m. Next class July 31. Pre-registration is required. Cost is \$5. Annual weight room use fee is \$90. Additional family members are \$50.

Exercise: Low-impact class meets from 5:15-6:15 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays. Cost is \$24 for eight weeks.

Aikido: Introductory martial arts class meets from 5:15-6:15 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday. Cost is \$35 per month. New classes begin the first of each month.

Aerobics: Classes meet from 5:15-6:15 p.m. Monday, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Cost is \$32 for eight weeks. Kristen Maidlow, instructor.

Ballroom dancing: Beginner classes meet from 7-8:15 p.m. Thursdays. Intermediate and advanced classes meet from 8:15-9:30 p.m. Cost is \$60 per couple.

Country and western dancing: Beginner class meets 7-8:30 p.m. Monday. Advanced class (must know basic steps to all dances) meets 8:30-10 p.m. Monday. Cost is \$20 per couple.

Fitness program: Health Related Fitness Program includes a medical screening examination and a 12-week individually prescribed exercise program. For more information call Larry Wier at x30301.

Gilruth Home Page: Check out all activities at the Gilruth online at: <http://www4.jsc.nasa.gov/ah/exceaa/Gilruth/Gilruth.htm>

Ticket Window

The following discount tickets are available for purchase in the Bldg. 11 Exchange Store from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Friday. For more information, call x35350 or x30990.

Loving Feelings Concert: 8 p.m. Sept. 9 at the Summit. Tickets are \$38.

EAA Texaribbean Cruise: Nov. 22-30. \$200 deposit per person, final payment by Sept. 15.

Astroworld: \$22.75. Season pass \$56.75. Multi-visit \$37.50

Waterworld: \$11.50.

Moody Gardens: Tickets are \$9.50 for 2 of 4 events.

Space Center Houston: Adult \$8.95; children (4-11) \$6.40.

Seaworld: Adult \$27.25; children(3-11)\$18.25.

Schlitterbahn: Adult \$20.25; children \$17.50.

Splashtown: Adult \$14.50; children (3-9) \$11.50.

Movie discounts: General Cinema, \$5.25; AMC Theater, \$4.50; Sony Loew’s Theater, \$4.75.

JSC logo shirts: Polo style, \$23. T-shirt, \$10.

Stamps: Book of 20, \$6.40.

Metro tickets: Available.

Orbit: The book *Orbit* by Jay Apt, Mike Helfert and Justin Wilkinson is on sale for \$28.

JSC history: The book *Suddenly Tomorrow Came... A History of Johnson Space Center* is available for \$11.

Roundup Deadlines

The Space News Roundup is published every other Friday. Story ideas should be submitted as far in advance as possible, but no later than two weeks prior to the date of publication.

The deadline for Dates & Data calendar items is three weeks prior to the date of publication.

Stories and ideas should be submitted to Managing Editor Karen Schmidt in Bldg. 2, Rm. 181, or via e-mail to karen.r.schmidt1@jsc.nasa.gov